

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 NEA-02 ISO-00 AF-02 SS-05 SSO-00 /011 R

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DRAFTED BY: S/CCT:JBROWNE

APPROVED BY: S/CCT:RFEAREY

AF/E:WCOOTE

S/S:PSHANKLE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 167579 ACTION ASMARA INFO ADDIS ABABA
KHARTOUM LONDON MOGADISCO CINCUSNAVEUR COMIDEASTFOR NAVCOMMUNIT
ASMARA COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC USCINCEUR NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI
JCS/NMCC SECDEF CNO CINCLANT CINCLANTFLT 16 JULY.

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON CISCO KIDNAPPERS

1. FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE (SLIGHTLY REVISED
AND EXPANDED FROM THAT CONTAINED STATE 166289) WAS GIVEN TO
DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN FOR NOON PRESS BRIEFING JULY 16:

QUESTION: CAN YOU CONFIRM THE REPORT THAT TWO AMERICANS
HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED IN ASMARA, ETHIOPIA?

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ANSWER: YES. TWO AMERICANS AND FOUR ETHIOPIANS WERE
ABDUCTED AT GUNPOINT ON JULY 14 AT THE U.S. NAVY COMMUNICA-
TIONS UNIT TRANSMISSION SITE ABOUT 12 KM. OUTSIDE OF ASMARA.
THE TWO AMERICANS, STEVEN C. CAMPBELL AND JAMES J. HARRELL,

ARE EMPLOYEES OF THE COLLINS INTERNATIONAL SERVICE COMPANY (CISCO) ON CONTRACT TO THE U.S. NAVY. THEY WERE ASSISTING IN THE OPERATION OF THE SITE.

QUESTION: WHO KIDNAPPED THEM AND WHAT IS THEIR OBJECTIVE?

ANSWER: WE DO NOT YET HAVE ANY FIRM INFORMATION ON THE IDENTITY OF THE KIDNAPPERS. THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO CONTACT WITH THEM AND NO MESSAGES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOING ABOUT IT?

ANSWER: WE HAVE INFORMED THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT OF THE INCIDENT AND ADVISED THEM THAT WE CONSIDER THAT IT IS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT TO BRING ABOUT THE SAFE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. WE HAVE, OF COURSE, OFFERED TO BE HELPFUL IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. BOTH OUR EMBASSY IN ADDIS ABABA AND OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN ASMARA ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED ADDITIONAL SECURITY FORCES TO PROTECT U.S. INSTALLATIONS AND PERSONNEL REMAINING IN ASMARA. THERE ARE ABOUT 50 AMERICANS THERE, INCLUDING 10 EMPLOYEES OF THE U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL.

QUESTION: IS THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT INVOLVED IN THIS INCIDENT?

ANSWER: WE HAVE NO CONFIRMED REPORTS CONCERNING THE IDENTITY OF THE ABDUCTORS.

QUESTION: WILL THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PAY RANSOM IF DEMANDED?

ANSWER: OUR POLICY IN THAT REGARD IS WELL KNOWN.

QUESTION: ARE CAMPBELL AND HARRELL MARRIED AND, IF SO, HAVE THEIR WIVES AND FAMILIES BEEN INFORMED OF THEIR ABDUCTION?

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ANSWER: YES. BOTH ARE MARRIED AND THEIR WIVES ARE IN ETHIOPIA AND HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE ABDUCTION OF THEIR HUSBANDS. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS IN TOUCH WITH THE FAMILIES OF BOTH MEN IN THE UNITED STATES.

QUESTION: WHAT KIND OF AN INSTALLATION IS IT THAT THE TWO MEN WERE WORKING ON?

ANSWER: THE U.S. NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS UNIT IN ASMARA IS ONE OF SEVERAL HIGH-FREQUENCY RELAY STATIONS IN THE DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. IT PROVIDES NAVY TACTICAL AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONTINGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT.

2. NOTE: QUESTION DID NOT ARISE AT JULY 16 PRESS BRIEF-
ING. KISSINGER UNQUOTE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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